

Nancy Haynes #62
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Q: Mrs. Haynes, where were you living in December, 1941?

A: In Waipahu.

Q: What were you doing on December 7, 1941?

A: Uh, let's see... that was Sunday morning and well we were just starting to do our laundry.

Q: Can you tell me about the events that occurred then?

A: Uh, it's... maybe it's difficult for you or anybody else to realize that the plantation was really like a plantation house back in the South I suppose, with no electric water heaters or... So we used to heat our water for laundry on the outside in the yard. And so we started the fire; that's when we saw the planes. And people had just came out of the houses all excited.

Q: What were peoples first impressions?

A: Manuevers. Because they were having manuevers all the time, but not with that many planes.

Q: How old were you at the time?

A: Eighteen.

Q: Eighteen? And uh, what was the first indication that you had that it wasn't just manuevers; that it was something out of the ordinary going on?

A: Well, we turned on the radio and that's where we found out what was going on.

Q: What was the reaction of your family?

A: Just shock. My brother was oldest in the family, and my mother, and I, and we were all surrounded. We lived in a Japanese camp. We called it Japanese camp, Spanish camp, Filipino camp; it was segregated. Anyway, um... they all came out and all excited, and just unbelieving, you know. I mean it's just something you don't believe, although you... we talked about and embargo and everything else. So something was bound to happen, yet when it did happen it was just unbelievable.

Q: Was there any damage to any of the houses or any casualties in any of the people living in the camp?

A: No, but just about a mile away there was a baseball park and

there were some kids from our neighborhood who were on there way to play baseball. And later on we heard that the planes strafed the kids and one of the kids died later from the strafing. I guess he was the first casualty from Waipahu.

Q: As you looked out toward Pearl Harbor, from Waipahu, what did you see?

A: Just smoke... nothing else. We couldn't see anything else.

Q: What happened later on that day?

A: Well, we were all scared so we just dare not do anything. So later on we got brave and went out to look and there were laying barb wire here and there. So we went back home and before you know it they said to have black out, and we couldn't leave the house, and

Q: What was black out like?

A: The next day we had to all go down and buy denim, or black fabric and hang them over the windows, so you wouldn't have any lights showing.

Q: Did you have to... what about driving at night?

A: You just don't do it.

Q: Were there any special restrictions put on the people in your community after the attack?

A: Well, there were so many scare stories, and then martial law was declared. So my neighbors, being Japanese and knew that I had gone to Japanese high school came over and told me I should destroy all my books... Japanese school books. I mean there's nothing there. It's just a Japanese... like your geography book, or history book, or whatever. And to this day I sort of regret that I burned them all but in the... you know, you just afraid of anything like that so you just burn everything connected to Japan. Although your American and yet FBI was a scary word at that time (laughter).

Q: Well, there must have been a lot of rumors going around at that time.

A: Yes, uh huh, there were.

Q: Do you recall any of them?

A: Yes, they say, and the Japanese community was sort of very... uh, the older generation. They celebrated Emperors birthday, and they had Japanese flag. We didn't have the Japanese flag but we had the Emperors picture. I think every family had one... Japanese family. So we burned all that; nothing to connect you to Japan. Although we were Japanese Americans and still you just

didn't do that.

Q: During the... were you in high school at the time?

A: No, I had graduated when I was sixteen.

Q: What did you do during the War?

A: I was married. I got married soon after that. And um, it was Depression in those days. You know, jobs were scarce, so I just stayed home and tended the garden. Everyone had a victory garden growing.

Q: Did you do any Red Cross work or anything like that?

A: Not in Waipahu, no. There were a few Christian churches that rolled bandages and all that. But there were very few, and I was brought up Buddhist so I didn't volunteer or anything like that.

Q: Can you think of anything else that might be interesting for somebody, say years from now who wants to know about that period?

A: Well, the interesting thing is the churches. They closed the churches; the Buddhist churches. Like they did in China, you know, during the cultural revolution. All the Buddhist churches were closed. Well, the same thing happened in Waipahu and I'm sure all over Hawaii, and the ministers were all interned. And they felt that the ministers were the link between Japan and the people. So they were interned which was kind of sad because all they did was preach Buddhism; that's it. And so when my brother was sent to Germany, my mother, being a mother, had to pray, you know. I mean she had to pray for safekeeping, and there was no church for her to go to. So she turned Christian and went to a Christian church. I thought that was the biggest thing, you know. And uh... I think most mothers would understand that.

Q: Was your brother in the 442nd?

A: No, he was in... he went in later. And my mother was very religious, and every time someone died from the 442nd [Regiment] or 100[th Battalion], they all went to church and prayed for him. And so it was funny being surrounded by all this Japanese first generation, and my poor mother not knowing where to put her allegiance or loyalty. Here her son is in the American Army and yet she is surround by neighbors who is always talking about how great Japan is. And so she just kept her mouth shut.

Q: Sounds like there was a real split in the community?

A: There was, yes, uh huh. I mean it's natural... understandable I think. Did you ever hear anything like that?

Q: Yes, several of the interviewees I've talked to have mentioned that.

A: I had a teacher who was born and raised here in Hawaii and was sent to Japan when he was about 13 or 14, and he went to high school there. And he was inducted into the Imperial Army. And when he came back he became my teacher... 6th grade teacher. Let me tell you, we got brainwashed. We really did. Everything was for the Emperor. You should be this way. You should by that way. And it's surprising that my classmates used to laugh about it, and they were the ones that volunteered for the 442nd. So his brainwashing didn't do much good (laughter).

Q: Doesn't sound like it.

A: But it's funny thinking back on those things, how he was and... well he taught us the better part... the better side of Japan; being industrious and working hard and doing your best, and things like that, sure. I think we absorbed a lot of that, but as for dying for the Emperor and all of that (laughter)...

Q: That didn't take huh? O.K. I really appreciate your giving me some of your time here and talking about that.